

**Security Council**

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Identical letters dated 20 March 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic finds it deplorable that, in their letter dated 9 March 2018 concerning the implementation of Security Council resolution 2401 (2018) (S/2018/211), the delegations of the United States, Great Britain and France have continued their practice of propagating lies and fabrications by levelling accusations that are aimed at discrediting the Syrian Government, in violation of their obligations under the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

Thanks to the sacrifices made by the Syrian Arab Army and its allies, tens of thousands of civilians from eastern Ghutah have recently been liberated from the oppression of the terrorist organizations the Nusra Front and Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), which are backed by Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, the United States, France and Great Britain, the Rahman Corps, which is backed by the Qatari regime, the Army of Islam, which is backed by the Wahhabi Saudi Arabian regime, and the Ahrar al-Sham Movement, which is backed by the Turkish regime. For years, those groups have used the civilians of eastern Ghutah as human shields, deprived them of their freedom, cut off their livelihoods, scattered their families, and diverted the humanitarian aid provided to eastern Ghutah by the United Nations to benefit their own members. One of the most recent violations committed by those groups was the targeting of the humanitarian corridors that the Syrian Government had secured to allow civilians to flee eastern Ghutah. As a result, humanitarian assistance convoys were unable to reach beneficiaries in that area.

The letter from the three delegations conclusively proves that they have no interest in or understanding of the substance of resolution 2401 (2018), which affirms the sovereign right of the Syrian State to combat terrorist organizations, purge terrorism from the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic and restore security and stability to Syrians throughout the Syrian Arab Republic. Contrary to the allegations contained in the letter, the Syrian Arab Republic and its allies have implemented resolution 2401 (2018) scrupulously while complying with the obligations of the Syrian Arab Republic under international humanitarian law by:

- Declaring an extended, daily humanitarian truce between the hours of 9 a.m. and 2 p.m.;



- Opening a number of humanitarian corridors for civilians who wish to leave the areas of eastern Ghutah controlled by armed terrorist groups and seek the protection of the Syrian State;
- Making shelter, food, medical care and other life necessities available to persons displaced from eastern Ghutah, whom the armed terrorist groups had deprived of the most basic necessities of life and humanitarian assistance. As at 20 March 2018, approximately 80,000 civilians had been evacuated to shelters;
- Enabling persons who had been displaced from eastern Ghutah to return to their villages and cities hours after the Syrian Arab Army had liberated them, and delivering all types of humanitarian assistance to them in their homes, in cooperation with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent and international governmental and non-governmental organizations operating in Syria;
- Enabling United Nations humanitarian organizations and dozens of vehicles loaded with humanitarian aid to gain access to Duma and other major cities in eastern Ghutah.

It is ironic that the delegations of the United States, Great Britain and France, despite being permanent members of the Security Council and, as such, purportedly committed to combating global terrorism, have agreed to align their policies and interests fully with those of the armed terrorist groups deployed in the eastern Ghutah region, namely, the Nusrah Front, ISIL, the Army of Islam, Ahrar al-Sham and the Rahman Corps, and to promote the terror sowed by those groups and their spurious allegations against the Syrian Government, such as those that are set out in the letter dated 28 February 2018 from the above-mentioned delegations (S/2018/169). The Syrian Government notes that the armed terrorist groups deployed in the eastern Ghutah region "implemented" Security Council resolution 2401 (2018) by attacking the civilians of eastern Ghutah as they fled the terrorists' repression and sought the protection of the Syrian State, by targeting humanitarian assistance convoys headed for eastern Ghutah and by firing hundreds of shells and rockets at Damascus, killing and injuring hundreds of persons, most of them children and women.

The Syrian Government wishes to remind everyone that the repeated allegations that it has used chemical weapons in Ghutah have become tired and pointless. The Government simply does not possess chemical weapons. The facts on the ground confirm that it is the armed terrorist groups, including the mercenaries of the so-called White Helmets group, which is backed by Washington, London, Paris, Ankara, Doha and Riyadh, that have used such weapons in the past and are prepared to use them now and in the future, so that those groups, as they have done on previous occasions, can accuse the Syrian Government and its allies of using such weapons.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) **Bashar Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative